

I. Amendment to the Specification

Applicant has amended the first line of the specification to correctly acknowledge the complete chain of priority to U.S. Serial No. 07/973,280. This earliest application is properly identified in the application papers as filed (Declaration) and Applicant notes that the present application was filed prior to November 29, 2000, thus Applicant submits that this amendment is timely (See 37 C.F.R. §1.78(a)(2)(ii)(B)).

II. Claim Amendments

Reviewing the first preliminary amendment in this case, it is evident that a numbering error was made due to an apparent assumption that claim amendments in the parent application were part of the original application. The error was compounded when some of these non-existent claims were cancelled and other claims were non-sequentially numbered.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the Communication mailed April 29, 2003 notifying Applicant of the numbering errors and proposing a renumbering solution. Applicant has adopted the Examiner's renumbering and, to expedite correction of the various errors in the first preliminary amendment and focus the claims of this application on particular subject matter, Applicant has cancelled claims 1-30 (as renumbered by the Examiner). New claims 31-52 have been added.

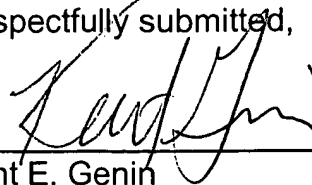
New Claims 31-52

New claims 31-52 relate to various novel features of the mask disclosed in the present application. Claims 31, 36 and 43 are the independent claims. Support for these claims may be found in the specification as originally filed. Support for independent claims 31 and 36 may be found throughout the specification as at, for example, FIGS. 9-12 and page 9. Support for independent claim 43 may be found throughout the specification as at, for example, at FIGS. 1-8.

III. CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks above, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for proper review and allowance. Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121, a marked-up version of the amended portion of the specification is attached at Appendix A.

Respectfully submitted,



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APPENDIX A

This is a continuation of U.S. Serial No.[Number] 08/842,956, filed April 25, 1997, now U.S. Patent No. 5,988,160, which is a continuation of [claiming priority of] U.S. Serial No. 08/270,752, filed on July 5, 1994, now U.S. Patent No. 5,645,049, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Serial No. 07/973,280, filed November 9, 1992, abandoned, [which] wherein[applications] U.S. Serial No. 08/842,956 and U.S. Serial No. 08/270,752 are hereby incorporated herein by reference.